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DRAFTED BY H:KBJENKINS:RMS

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R 260147Z MAR 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 068002

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EEWT, RO

SUBJECT: TRADE AGREEMENT

FOR AMBASSADOR BARNES

1. WE HAVE COMPLETED INFORMAL CONGRESSIONAL CONSULTATIONS WITH REASONABLY GOOD RECEPTION. THERE WERE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT THE TECHNICAL MATTERS WITHIN THE AGREEMENT BUT WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO RESOLVE THEM IN SUBSEQUENT DISCUSSIONS. ON THE EMIGRATION ISSUE, HOWEVER, WE ENCOUNTERED CONSIDERABLE CYNICISM ABOUT THE VALIDITY OF ROMANIAN ASSURANCES. THERE IS A CLEAR EXPECTATION THAT ROMANIAN EXIT PERMITS SHOULD EXCEED LAST YEAR'S TOTAL IF THE PERFORMANCE IS TO BE ACCEPTED AS "LEADING SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES OF SEC.402 OF THE ACT".

2. CONGRESSMAN VANIK, DELIGHTED BY NEWS THAT GOR IS RESUMING PASSPORT ISSUANCE, HAD NO PARTICULAR PROBLEM WITH THE LANGUAGE MACOVESCU AUTHORIZED US TO USE. HIS OFFICE HAD LEARNED FROM THE ISRAELIS HERE THAT THE GOR REPORTEDLY
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CANCELLED ALL PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS AND IS NOW REQUIRING

POTENTIAL EMIGRANTS TO RE-APPLY. VANIK, WHO FULLY APPRECIATES POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE OF TRADE AGREEMENT AND HAS BEEN ONE OF FOREMOST CHAMPIONS OF CLOSE US-ROMANIAN RELATIONS IN THE CONGRESS, EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT GOR MIGHT USE THIS RE-APPLICATION PROCEDURE TO TRIM THE NUMBERS

ARTIFICALLY. VANIK HAS SUGGESTED THAT IT WOULD CLEARLY BE IN ROMANIAN SELF-INTEREST TO PERMIT 1975 LEVEL TO RISE SOMEWHAT ABOVE THAT OF 1974 TO UNDERLINE FACT THAT THERE IS PROGRESS RATHER THAN RETROGRESSION. HE INTENDS TO TALK TO BOGDAN ABOUT THIS ON HIS OWN. (ARMITAGE SPOKE WITH BOGDAN EVENING OF MARCH 21 FOLLOWING RABBI MILLER'S CONVERSATION WITH HARTMAN. AFTER REFERRING TO POSITION JEWISH COMMUNITY TAKING ON ISSUE OF JEWISH EMIGRATION, ARMITAGE STRESSED IMMEDIATE NEED FOR SHARP RISE IN NUMBER OF JEWS ALLOWED TO LEAVE, HOPEFULLY SEVERAL HUNDRED BY END OF MARCH, IN ORDER TO COMMUNICATE THAT JANUARY-FEBRUARY RESTRICTIONS HAD BEEN LIFTED AND MORE LIBERAL POLICY BEING PURSUED. BOGDAN UNDERTOOK TO COMMUNICATE TO GOR.)

3. JACKSON'S STAFF WELCOMED THE INDICATION THAT THE GOR HAS RESUMED PASSPORT ISSUANCE AND RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO AVOID PUBLIC DISCUSSION OF NUMBERS. NONETHELESS, THEY EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT GOR BE UNDER NO ILLUSIONS THAT WE WILL BE WATCHING THEIR PERFORMANCE CLOSELY. JACKSON'S PEOPLE WERE CRITICAL OF GOR FOR LEVYING UNDER-THE-TABLE FINANCIAL CHARGES ON POTENTIAL EMIGRANTS AND THEN DELAYING THEIR DEPARTURE. THEY INSIST THAT THIS IS A FORM OF BALKAN SHAKEDOWN AND "AT LEAST THE GOR SHOULD DELIVER THE PASSPORTS THAT ARE PAID FOR."

4. REFLECTING THEIR TALKS WITH JEWISH COMMUNITY LEADERS (WHO, AS REPORTED SEPTTEL, ALSO MET WITH DEPARTMENT OFFICERS), JACKSON'S OFFICE (PERLE) PROVIDED US WITH FOLLOWING MONTHLY FIGURES OVER LAST 12 YEARS:

1963: 13,000; 1964: 26,000; 1965: 11,000
1966: 3,600; 1967: 800; 1968: 220
1969: 1,700; 1970: 5,600; 1971: 1,900
1972: 3,000; 1973: 4,000; 1974: 3,700
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PERLE SUGGESTED THAT, IN VIEW OF SHARP VARIATIONS IN ANNUAL TOTALS, IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT GOR CAN AND HAS BEEN VERY LIBERAL INDEED IN HANDLING APPLICATIONS IN SOME YEARS. HE SAID IT IS "THEIR ESTIMATE" THAT SOME 40,000 JEWS STILL SEEK TO LEAVE ROMANIA. HE SUGGESTED PRIVATELY THAT IF THE GOR WOULD ASSURE THAT THEY COULD PROCESS "UP TO, SAY, 1,000 APPLICATIONS A MONTH AND WOULD ISSUE DOCUMENTATION

ON THE BASIS OF THIS CAPACITY PLUS TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE FLOW OF APPLICATIONS", THE PROBLEM WOULD BE SOLVED ONCE AND FOR ALL.

5. JAVITS SUPPORTS THE TRADE AGREEMENT AND IS PLEASED THAT THE GOR HAS PROVIDED US WITH "ASSURANCES" RE JEWISH EMIGRATION. HE IS SKEPTICAL THAT GOR ASSURANCES WILL BE

FULFILLED. HE EXPRESSED STRONG CRITICISM THAT WHEN ISRAELI FUNDS WERE PROVIDED TO THE ROMANIANS, THEY SUBSEQUENTLY FAILED TO PROVIDE "THE PROMISED BODIES".

6. SENATOR RIBICOFF SAID THAT HIS ONLY CONCERN WAS THAT THERE BE A CLEAR, QUICK DEMONSTRATION TO THE JEWISH COMMUNITY THAT THE ISSUING OF EMIGRATION PERMITS HAD BEEN RESUMED. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO BE KEPT INFORMED HOW THE EMIGRATION FLOW IS DEVELOPING, AND, WITH THAT RESERVATION, SUPPORTED OUR CONCLUDING THE AGREEMENT.

7. SENATE FINANCE STAFF MORE OR LESS APPROVED THE AGREEMENT AS WE OUTLINED IT TO THEM, INCLUDING OUR REPORT ON EMIGRATION AND THE WAIVER. IN OUR MEETING WITH THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE STAFF AND MEMBERS, WE DISCUSSED THE ECONOMIC RAMIFICATIONS OF THE AGREEMENT, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF POINTED QUESTIONS ABOUT ECONOMIC IMPACT FROM FOREIGN TRADE SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN GREEN. HE AND RANKING REPUBLICAN BARBER CONABLE BOTH AGREED THAT THE AGREEMENT SEEMED LIKE A GOOD THING. CONABLE WAS SOLID IN HIS COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THE BILL WHEN IT IS SUBMITTED FOR FINAL CONSIDERATION. GREEN, CONABLE AND STAFF MEMBERS WERE ALL MORE INTERESTED THAN WE EXPECTED IN THE EMIGRATION QUESTION BUT WERE PRINCIPALLY CONCERNED THAT WE HAVE THE ACQUIESCENCE OF SENATORS JACKSON, JAVITS, RIBICOFF AND CONGRESS-
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MAN VANIK. KISSINGER

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